

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Unity School of Christianity Historic District

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number at the intersection of State Highway 350 & Colbern Rd. n/a not for publicationcity, town Unity Village n/a vicinitystate Missouri code MO county Jackson code 095 zip code 64065

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

☒ private☐ public-local☐ public-State☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

☐ building(s)☒ district☐ site☐ structure☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

2114

Noncontributing

 buildings sites structures objects Total

Unity School of Christianity

Unity Village, MO 64065

Name of related multiple property listing:

n/aNumber of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register n/a

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this
☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official Claire F. BlackwellDeputy State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

Date

24 February 1989In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

☐ entered in the National Register.☐ See continuation sheet.☐ determined eligible for the National
Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.☐ removed from the National Register.☐ other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion: religious structure
Industry: water works
Recreation and Culture: work of art
Landscape: plaza
Commerce/Trade: office building

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion: religious structure
Industry: water works
Recreation and Culture: work of art
Landscape: plaza
Commerce/Trade: office building

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

20th Century Revival: Italian Renaissance

foundation concrete
walls stucco, cast-stone
roof tile
other concrete; other: cut cast-stone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Unity School of Christianity Historic District consists of two buildings, a fountain, balustrade, and immediate landscaping within a larger building complex (see map) located at Unity Village, Jackson County, Missouri. Designed and constructed in the Italian Renaissance tradition between 1927 and 1930 (photos #1-7), the nominated properties possess sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling so as to convey architectural significance. Not included in this nomination are adjacent buildings and structures/objects which were constructed after the 50 year cut-off period. In the future, these contemporary structures, also designed in the Italian Renaissance tradition, may be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Also located at Unity Village are several buildings and structures associated with the early history of Unity Farm, the predecessor of Unity Village. These resources are possibly eligible for National Register listing due to their historic significance, but are not included in this nomination due to their location some distance from the nominated district and a physical appearance unrelated to the architectural significance of the nominated resources.

Unity Village is 15 miles southeast of Kansas City, Missouri at the junction of State Highway 350 and Colbern Road. An incorporated municipality comprising 1600 acres and over 75 structures, Unity Village maintains its own post office, fire and security departments, and water system.

The following properties contribute to the historic district:

Unity Tower

Designed in 1927 by the Kansas City architectural firm of Boillot and Lauck, Unity Tower is a 150 foot reinforced-concrete structure, equal in height to an eleven-story building (photos #8-11). Built in the Italian Renaissance style, Unity Tower is composed of three classically proportioned units of stucco, concrete, and stone. Its base features paired fenestration at the east, west and north elevations, and two arched entrances (one now permanently closed) at the south facade (photo #12). Window and entrance surrounds, keystones, and quoining, are made of native limestone, quarried on Unity grounds (photo #13).

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The shaft is separated from the base by a wide, molded cast-stone belt course. The second-story level consists of paired fenestration at each elevation. Four symmetrically placed arched recesses (reaching from the third to seventh-story levels) punctuated by rows of multi-paned, steel casement windows articulate each elevation, while emphasizing the Tower's verticality (photo #8).

The final stage of the campanile is marked by a rusticated, cast-stone observatory. Each elevation features a prominent centered arch, flanked by smaller shouldered arches. The overall surface rhythmically undulates between arch and pier. A cast-stone balustrade surrounds the observatory floor, separating it from the shaft below. Crowning the Unity Tower is a pyramidal roofed stucco unit (photo #8).

Enclosed within the walls of the campanile, between the seventh and eighth floors, is a tank containing 100,000 gallons of water, which supplies Unity Village with its own water system. "In carrying this water system, the frame of the tower will support a load of more than 400 tons."¹ In addition, Unity Tower houses offices for radio and television, public relations, overseas communication, and a credit union (photo #14). It also serves as the W. Rickert Fillmore Memorial with its electronic carillon. Furniture and interior trimwork were constructed of oak and walnut from trees salvaged on Unity property. Millwork was done at the Unity sawmill.

Silent Unity

Silent Unity is a combination prayer facility/office building, situated to the east of Unity Tower; it was also designed in the Italian Renaissance tradition by Boillot and Lauck in 1927 (photos #15-22). Of a T-shaped plan, the main two-story unit (to the south) measures 176 feet by 67 feet. Its main entrance (south elevation), features a recessed arched entry flanked by a pair of Doric-inspired columns with smooth shafts, between a pair of pilasters constructed as a projection of the entrance wall. Above the main portal, separated from the first-story by a wide molded entablature, is a single multi-paned casement window, with a cut cast-stone surround, placed between two panels featuring enriched foliated rinceaux (photo #15-16).

At the west facade of the main or south unit is another elaborately embellished entrance. Treatment of this entry is basically a duplication of the design of the south entrance with the exception of two Doric-styled columns marking the entry and two multi-paned French doors flanking the central door. All entrances at this elevation have multi-paned transoms. In addition, a denticulated entablature rests between the second-story foliated relief and the entryway (photo #17).

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An entrance at the east elevation has been obscured by a 1940s addition of a cloistered walkway leading to Unity Inn; however, this walkway has only a minor impact on Silent Unity's historic appearance.

Fenestration of the south elevation is multi-paned casement-style with fixed arched transoms at the first-story level and fixed rectangular transoms at the second-story level. First-story windows at the end bay feature molded entablature surrounds; second-story windows at the end bay are marked by cut cast-stone surrounds. This handling of the fenestration is repeated at the north, east, and west facades of the south unit (photos #15-16).

The two-story north unit, set perpendicular to the south or principal unit, measures 85 feet by 50 feet and features cloistered walkways, with Corinthian columns, at the east and west elevations. Fenestration is multi-paned casement-style with the exception of a single, fixed window (non-original) at the second-story level, west facade. Also non-original are the far north end second-story windows at both east and west elevations (photos #18-21).

The north wing terminates in an apse that features eight Corinthian-styled pilasters (set on a continuous pedestal), below a wide entablature. A single arched wooden door is located at the far north end of the apse (photo #22).

The entire structure features a wide cornice with carved wooden brackets and a red tiled roof. Quoining, window detailing, and columns are cast stone.

The interior, which includes offices and two prayer chapels, has retained its original character with little modification over the years. Most significant is the Silent Unity Visitors Chapel featuring elaborate stenciled designs. This intimate chapel is located at the far north end of the first story level (photos #23-24). On the second-story level at the east end of the main or south unit are the offices of Myrtle and Charles Fillmore, co-founders of the Unity School of Christianity. These offices are reached by a vaulted reception area featuring carved wood Corinthian columns (photo #25). Charles' office, now occupied by the vice-president of Unity, features decorative crown molding, chestnut wainscotting, and a cut cast-stone fireplace (photo #26). The office that was originally occupied by Myrtle Fillmore features similar decoration, although more delicately handled (photo #27).

Silent Unity Fountain and Landscape

The Silent Unity Fountain, attributed to Boillot and Lauck, is located to the east of the Silent Unity Building. The Silent Unity Fountain features a large cut cast-stone retaining basin with a squat pedestal base supporting a

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prominent bowl resting on four volutes (photo #28). The overall character of the fountain correlates to the upper-story fenestration detail of the Silent Unity Building, and because of this relationship, its design is attributable to Boillot and Lauck.

Also included in the Unity School of Christianity Historic District is the immediate landscape surrounding both the Unity Tower and Silent Unity Building, implemented by 1930. This landscaping, comprised of tended lawns and shrubbery, interspersed with semi-circular paths and linear walkways, reinforces both the structural and aesthetic principles of Silent Unity and Unity Tower. The original design intent complements the two structures, especially in relationship to Silent Unity, where the formal garden is in keeping with the Italian Renaissance tradition. The original balustrade, which stretched from the north side of the tower to approximately 100 feet east of the Silent Unity Building, has been partially replaced (less than 1/8 of the total length) with a solid concrete wall (photos #4, 18). This alteration, it is important to note, does not seriously compromise the landscaping of Unity as a contributing element of the district.

¹ Kansas City Star, November 17, 1929, p. 1D.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1927-1930

Significant Dates

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Significant Person

n/a

Architect/Builder

Boillot, Elmer (1881-1957)

Lauck, Jesse F. (1888-1969)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Unity School of Christianity Historic District, Unity Village, Missouri, is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C and is significant in the area of ARCHITECTURE as a fine, and in the Kansas City area, unusual example of the Italian Renaissance design tradition. It is eligible under Criteria Consideration A due to its architectural distinction. Designed by the Kansas City architectural firm, Boillot and Lauck, and built in 1927-30¹, the two buildings and the surrounding landscape which make up the district, were envisioned as a new home for the world headquarters of the Unity School of Christianity. The Unity movement, a New Thought religious body, was founded by Charles and Myrtle Fillmore in Kansas City, Missouri in 1889.² Designed for both symbolic and utilitarian purposes, Silent Unity (a prayer facility/office building) and Unity Tower (a water tower/office building) possess many of the distinctive formal design characteristics of the Italian Renaissance style: symmetrical elevations, low red-tile hip roofs, balustrades, pillars, colonnades, arched fenestration, smooth wall surfaces, rusticated quoins, and the appearance of Travertine, a beige-colored stone building material popular in Italy (in actuality, Jackson County limestone). Linking the two buildings, a formally designed landscape reinforces the Italian Renaissance design concept, in striking contrast to the district's rural pastoral setting on the outskirts of Kansas City.

Background

Co-founded by Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, Unity, a worldwide movement aimed at practical Christianity, was born in Kansas City, Missouri in 1889. In 1886, the Fillmores had attended a New Thought lecture given by Dr. E. B. Weeks in Kansas City.³ New Thought or Metaphysical religion stems from the work of Phineas Parkhurst Quimby (1802-1866), a clock maker from Belfast, Maine, who became intrigued by the therapeutic power of mental healing. Disciples of Quimby's teachings included Mary Barker Eddy (1821-1910), the founder of Christian Science, and Warren Felt Evans (1817-1889), a Swedenborgian and author of six books on intuitive perception and mental science. Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, third generation leaders of the New Thought/Metaphysical

☒ See continuation sheet

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school discovered the power of positive thinking and they, too, "advertised themselves as Healers and Teachers."⁴ In 1889, they launched the periodical Modern Thought, publicizing their views⁵ and one year later formed the Society of Silent Help, a silent prayer group. In 1891, Charles Fillmore coined the term "Unity"; and the name of the prayer group was changed to the Society of Silent Unity. Published by Unity Book Company, later renamed the Unity Tract Society, Unity magazine was established as a special organ for the prayer group.⁶ In 1914, the Society of Silent Unity and the Unity Tract Society were incorporated as the Unity School of Christianity with a membership of more than 25,000.⁷

According to Winthrop S. Hudson's book Religion in America, the Fillmores denied that they were starting a new sect, "they were only teaching a practical philosophy to supplement the teachings of the existing churches."⁸ Although Unity beliefs are based on the philosophy of the Fillmores and other Unity leaders, there is no creed. As Unity grew, demands for more instruction made it necessary to begin a correspondence course in 1909. Later in 1925, the Unity Annual Conference was formed to insure that the growing number of Unity centers could adequately teach the Fillmores' ideas.⁹ Today, the Unity movement has grown into "one of the largest religious centers in the country specializing in mail order service and summer conferences." Several periodicals, Unity, Daily World, and Wee Wisdom, are circulated beyond the membership and Unity Radio broadcasts "The Word," a short meditation that can be heard over numerous stations, coast-to-coast.¹⁰

Unity Facilities

The administrative offices, prayer facilities, and printing plant of the Unity School of Christianity were housed at several different locations in Kansas City (including 1315 McGee and the northwest corner of 10th and Walnut Streets, now both extinct) until 1906, when Unity built their first facility especially suited for their needs at 913 Tracy.

Over a period of fourteen years, two additional structures were built: Unity Inn (901 Tracy) and the Unity Administration Building (917 Tracy). The buildings at 913 and 917 Tracy Avenue housed the Unity Ministry, a printing facility, radio studio, and administrative offices.¹¹ The popularity of a vegetarian cafeteria that Unity started for its workers was the impetus behind the construction in 1920 of Unity Inn, which served exclusively vegetarian meals to the Kansas City community.¹² Still standing today, the 9th and Tracy complex is probably eligible for National Register listing due to its association with the early years of the Unity movement (913 Tracy has been listed on the City of Kansas City Register of Historic Places), although 901 and 917 Tracy have experienced a number of alterations.

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Although a 1920 building campaign had provided more space for Unity activities, it was thought that the continual expansion of Unity would soon outgrow the limited space in urban Kansas City. The dream of Charles and Myrtle Fillmore was to have a self-sufficient, incorporated city to be the world headquarters for Unity - a place that could truly embody their philosophy of religion and life. The organization began to think about moving its activities to Unity Farm - 58 acres southeast of Kansas City that the Fillmores had purchased in 1919.¹³ Originally the farmland supplied all the vegetables, fruits, and eggs for Unity Inn. By 1926, Unity had acquired more than 1,000 acres at this location¹⁴ and preliminary plans for the new Unity headquarters were drawn by Kansas City architect Elmer Boillot.¹⁵

Elmer Boillot and Jesse F. Lauck

Denver born Jesse F. Lauck entered the architecture field at the age of 19 as a partner with Elmer Boillot, a native of Bonnots Mill, Missouri. The partnership, located in Kansas City, Missouri, flourished for 40 years until Boillot's death in 1957 when Lauck formed his own company, J.F. Lauck Associates. After a formidable career, Lauck retired in 1966. Of the scores of structures designed by Boillot and Lauck and skillfully executed in a wide range of architectural idioms, the Walnuts Apartments (1927; 1929-30), in a Jacobethan style, and the Hotel Phillips (1929-31), which when built was the tallest hotel in Kansas City, are surely their best known.

The association between Boillot and Lauck and the Unity School of Christianity had long been established prior to the conception of the new complex. Boillot and Lauck had designed additions to the 917 Tracy property in 1914 and 1917, and Boillot alone had designed Unity Inn (901 Tracy) in 1920 and an addition to 913 Tracy in 1915. At Unity Farm, shortly after the first of a series of land acquisitions, Boillot was also involved in designing several English-type residences for Unity employees.¹⁶ However, the expansive building complex proposed for Unity's new headquarters was a departure for their previous design work for Unity. The new complex, arranged in a quadrangle and linked by landscaping, was to employ Italian Renaissance design motifs.

Silent Unity

The heart of Unity School of Christianity is the Society of Silent Unity, a world wide prayer ministry that today responds to more than 3 million letters and telephone calls annually. Myrtle Fillmore, its founder, believed that "she had received a healing through prayer and meditation of an ailment physicians of her time thought hopeless."¹⁷ In extending prayer help to others, the Society of Silent Unity was formed. Silent Unity, as it is now called,

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functions as a 24-hour intercessory prayer facility. A single, fixed bay window on the east elevation of its north window cases a constant light, symbolizing the continuous prayer vigil that has been kept since 1890.

The Silent Unity building was designed in 1927 with revisions in 1928. Completed in 1929, it was the first building finished in the new complex at Unity Farm.¹⁸ The appearance of the Silent Unity building has its roots in the palazzo and ecclesiastical architecture of Quattrocento and Cinquecento, Italy, yet its unusual cut cast-stone detailing and sophisticated interior embellishments all contribute to its unique character. For a brief time, Silent Unity moved its operations into the new structure, but because of the unfavorable economic conditions of the 1930's Unity was forced to temporarily return to its Tracy Avenue complex.¹⁹

Unity Tower

Before 1927, water was furnished to the Unity Farm residences by filtering a stream on Unity property and storing it in a 50,000 gallon elevated tank.²⁰ With the eventual move of Unity's operations from Tracy Avenue to Unity Farm, the water supply would need to be expanded.

The solution was to design a structure that would physically harmonize with a larger group of buildings yet, most importantly, would function as a much-needed water reservoir. "We needed (more) water to operate the Farm and every time we drilled for water we got oil and gas. So across the railroad tracks on our property we made an artificial lake...Then we had the water, but we had to get the elevation and the pressure to distribute it where needed. So we built the Tower with its huge water tank at the top...It is a symbol and a delight to the eye of course, but it also makes available a continuous supply of 100,000 gallons of water without which the Farm could not be run..."²¹

Designed in 1927 with revisions in 1928, Unity Tower stands not only as a symbol of the Unity School of Christianity, but a rare local example of an industrial structure cloaked in Italian Renaissance architecture. The use of a masonry supported tank was a desirable solution because it could be constructed of local materials and was adaptable to prevailing architectural styles. Historically its architectural antecedent (form and massing) was the campanile of 15th and 16th century northern Italy (i.e. the Tower of San Marcos, Venice) - not a surprising link since many architects in early 20th century America had looked to the campanile for a design solution.²²

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The water reservoir in Unity Tower, located on the 7th floor, rests on a 12" thick slab of finished reinforced concrete (pan and joist construction) and measures 27'4" in diameter and 23'3" in height.²³ It is fabricated of 1/2" to 5/8" plate steel and is horizontally and vertically riveted in rings. The standard for this type of engineering became popular in the 1880s, where the tank itself, commonly fabricated of wrought-iron, was supported on I-beams or girders.²⁴ An early example is the 1884 Yonkers Tower (David M. Nichols, New York) where a 50,000 gallon tank rests on two tiers of fifteen inch I-beams.²⁵ Although Unity Tower uses pan and joist construction instead of I-beams to support the heavy load of the tank, the basic engineering approach remains the same.

The actual engineering of the design of Unity Tower's water tank and subsequent support system is obscure: Henrici-Lowry, the consulting engineers from Kansas City who worked on the design of Unity Tower,²⁶ no longer existed and did not have a successor firm; the Industrial Arts Index from 1926-1932²⁷ does not contain any entries covering Unity's new building campaign; and noted experts in the field of engineering and water-tower design²⁸ cannot offer any revealing facts. The non-existence of a statewide survey (Missouri) of historic water towers prevents the possibility of making any statement regarding the engineering significance of Unity Tower.

Although the Unity Tower remains a unique local landmark, there are many examples of decorative water reservoirs²⁹ found across the United States. The Lawrence Hill Water Tower in Lawrence, Massachusetts (George Adams, 1898) clothed in the Romanesque, and the Gothic-clad Chicago Water Tower (W.W. Boyington, 1869) are two examples from the 19th Century. The Lawrence Hill tower has been recognized as an American Water Landmark by the American Water Works Association (AWWA) and like the Unity Tower, contains an observation deck. The Chicago Water Tower has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Designed the same year as Unity Tower are two Spanish Colonial Revival water reservoirs: La Cienga Water Tower in Beverly Hills, California and the Highland Park Water Tower in Saint Paul, Minnesota. The Highland Park Water Tower is also an AWWA registered American Water Landmark.

In Missouri, there are several examples of architecturally sheathed water reservoirs. The Grand Avenue Water Tower, a 154-foot Corinthian column designed by George I. Barnett in 1870, the Bissell Street Water Tower, a red brick Romanesque structure designed in 1885 by William S. Eames, and the Compton Hill Water Tower, designed in the Richardsonian-Romanesque tradition by Harvey Ellis in c.1889 are all prominent landmarks in the St. Louis skyline. In the southeast corner of the state, the Caruthersville Water Tower, built in 1903, has the appearance of a lighthouse. And, in nearby Kansas City, the

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Gothic-styled Waldo Water Tower, also recognized by the AWWA, is a prominent tower designed in 1920 by the Tifft Construction Company of Buffalo, New York. All of the above Missouri water towers are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Unity Tower, like the previously mentioned elevated water reservoirs, plays a much bigger role in the community than its decorative skin suggests. Its function as a water tower played a significant role in the expansion of Unity Village and most importantly, it was a key to Unity's independence. In addition, Unity Tower, which can be seen for miles in many directions, remains one of the most conspicuous landmarks in Jackson County, Missouri. Because of its pronounced visibility, it has become the symbol of Unity School of Christianity.

Landscape and Silent Unity Fountain

The original landscaping at Unity Farm as pictured in a 1931 photograph complements the adjacent structures. Not a landscape of contemplation, it was designed simply in response to the formality and stability of the surrounding Italian Renaissance vocabulary. The Silent Unity Building and Unity Tower are linked together by a diversified landscape which includes walkways, topiarys, balustrade, and a fountain that lends variety and contrast to the entire scheme.

Architectural Significance

The grouping composed of Unity Tower, Silent Unity and the surrounding landscape, which recalls the Italian Renaissance tradition in architecture, is unique to the built environment in Kansas City, Missouri. Unity Tower, with its tripartite design, arched vocabulary and pyramidal crown, clings to a classical interpretation not to be found elsewhere in the metropolitan area. Similarly, Silent Unity employs rich Renaissance-inspired embellishments in the capitals, portal bays, and arcade. Its fenestration, arched at the first story level with smaller, less elaborate rectangular upper story units and the recessed entry areas accentuated by slender classical columns are details borrowed from Italian prototypes. In addition, Silent Unity's boxed eaves with decorative bracketing and overall strict adherence to symmetry help to distinguish its Italian Renaissance design from other Mediterranean styles, commonly found in Kansas City.

While Unity Tower and Silent Unity remain landmark examples of the Italian Renaissance style in Kansas City, because they express a sophisticated

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knowledge of the classic principles of that period of architecture, there are several Italian Renaissance influenced domestic structures in the area that should be noted. Among them are: The James F. Halpin Residence, by John W. McKecknie (1913); the E. J. Sweeney Residence, by Keene and Simpson (1918); and The Victor Wilson Residence, by Edward W. Tanner (1928).

Conclusion

Due to the unfavorable economic conditions of the 1930's, further construction did not occur at Unity Farm until 1940; all phases of Unity's ministry were not permanently moved from the 9th and Tracy complex to the Unity Farm location until the late 1940's. However, buildings constructed after the 50-year historic timeframe continued the original Italian Renaissance design concept.

With the move to Unity Farm, the Fillmores had sought a peaceful and inspirational atmosphere for Unity workers and visitors. The new construction at Unity Farm quickly gained regional recognition for its beauty of architecture and pastoral setting as demonstrated by a rather lengthy entry in The WPA Guide to 1930's Missouri describing the farm as a "place-to-see". Today, the Unity School of Christianity Historic District continues to fulfill the Fillmores' dream as an environment of great beauty.

Footnotes

- 1 Although both the plans for Unity Tower and Silent Unity submitted with this nomination are dated July 25, 1928 and March 10, 1928 (with revisions April 16, 1928) respectively, several sources specifically state that plans (by Boillot and Lauck) for both structures had been completed in 1927. An article in the Kansas City Star dated March 27, 1927 states that "the building program would begin in May of that year." Western Contractor, dated July 20, 1927 (page 36) states "plans complete on Silent Unity and Campanile" with Boillot and Lauck as the architects. The March 1927 Star, article and the October 30, 1927 Journal Post illustrate both structures in their present form. In addition, photograph #1 dated July, 1927 (included with this nomination) clearly shows the beginning of the Tower's construction.
- 2 J. Gordon Melton, The Encyclopedia of American Religions, v. II., (Wilmington, North Carolina: McGrath Publishing Company, 1978) p. 59.
- 3 Ibid, p. 59.

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- 4 Ibid, pp. 51-56.
- 5 Ibid, p. 59.
- 6 James Dillet Freeman, The Story of Unity, (Lee's Summit, Missouri: Unity School of Christianity, 1954) p. 61, 67, p. 70-71.
- 7 Ibid, p. 70-71.
- 8 Winthrop, S. Hudson, Religion in America, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973); 290
- 9 The Encyclopedia of American Religion, p. 59.
- 10 Ibid, p. 60.
- 11 Kansas City Star, March 23, 1914, n.p.
- 12 Kansas City Star, July 18, 1920, n.p.; The Story of Unity, p. 130.
- 13 The Story of Unity, p. 131; Kansas City Star, July 18, 1920, n.p.
- 14 Kansas City Star, November 28, 1926, n.p.
- 15 The office of Design and Space Planning at Unity School has a 1926 preliminary plan for the Unity Complex, which includes Silent Unity and Unity Tower in their present form. Elmer Boillot is the architect.
- 16 Kansas City Star, March 25, 1923, n.p.; Design and Space Planning files.
- 17 Audry White, "Silent Unity and Tower." (Unity School of Christianity, Design and Space Planning, 1984, photocopy) p. 8.
- 18 Kansas City Star, March 23, 1987, n.p.
- 19 The Story of Unity, p. 135.
- 20 Engineering News Record, September 8, 1927, p. 399. The elevated tank is extinct.
- 21 The Story of Unity, p. 137.

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- 22 Paul Goldberger, *The Skyscraper*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982) pp. 38-39. Goldberger discusses the art of "grafting historical forms onto modern frames."
- 23 Concrete and Column Schedule, Unity Tower, no date, p. S-1.
- 24 Carol Ann Dubie, "The Architecture and Engineering of Elevated Water Storage Structures: 1870-1940." (Master's Thesis, George Washington University, 1980) p. 17.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Western Contractor, July 20, 1927, p. 36.
- 27 The Industrial Arts Index from 1926-1932 only lists the entry cited in note 19.
- 28 Robert Vogel, curator of Civil and Mechanical Engineering at the National Museum of American History; Graham Harper at the Chicago Bridge and Ironworks Industries (now CBI); and individuals at Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) in Washington, D.C.
- 29 This discussion also includes standpipes.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

☒ See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approximately two acres

UTM References

A

1	5
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3	7	8	2	2	0
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4	3	1	1	6	9	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

1	5
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3	7	8	1	3	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	3	1	1	5	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

B

1	5
---	---

3	7	8	2	5	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	3	1	1	6	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

D

1	5
---	---

3	7	8	0	9	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	3	1	1	6	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

☒ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

☒ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title 1. Cydney E. Millstein, Architectural Historian

organization Architectural and Art Historical Research date 25 July, 1988

street & number P. O. Box 22551 telephone (816) 363-0567

city or town Kansas City state Missouri zip code 64113

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Unity School of Christianity Historic District

Section number 9 Page 1

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet**

Unity School of Christianity Historic District

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Starting at an imaginary point, which is the intersection of two lines that encompass the northern and eastern balustrated walls enclosing the Silent Unity Garden, go in a south-by-southeasterly direction, 236 feet to the northern edge of the sidewalk fronting the Silent Unity Building, to do this the line must pass through a (1940's) cloistered walkway at its junction with the Inn Building (1973); from the edge of said sidewalk go in a west-by-southwesterly direction following said sidewalk 385 feet to the western edge of a sidewalk which connects the Bridge of Faith (1950) and Unity Tower; then following this second sidewalk go in a north-by-northwesterly direction until reaching the southern edge of the sidewalk fronting Unity Tower; from this point go in a west-by-southwesterly direction 23.5 feet along said sidewalk; then go 91 feet in a north-by-northwesterly direction through the balustrated wall; then go in an east-by-northeasterly direction 407.5 feet to the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated district contains two buildings, a fountain, a cast-stone balustrade, and the immediate surrounding designed landscape. These properties represent the first phase of construction in a complex designed to be the new world headquarters for the Unity School of Christianity, Unity Village, Missouri. The boundaries were chosen to include all the historic structures and to exclude later construction.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Unity School of Christianity Historic District

Section number 11 Page 1

2. Beverly A. Fleming
Chief, Preservation Planning Section and
State Contact Person
Historic Preservation Program
Department of Natural Resources
P. O. Box 176
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101
February 24, 1989
314/751-7960

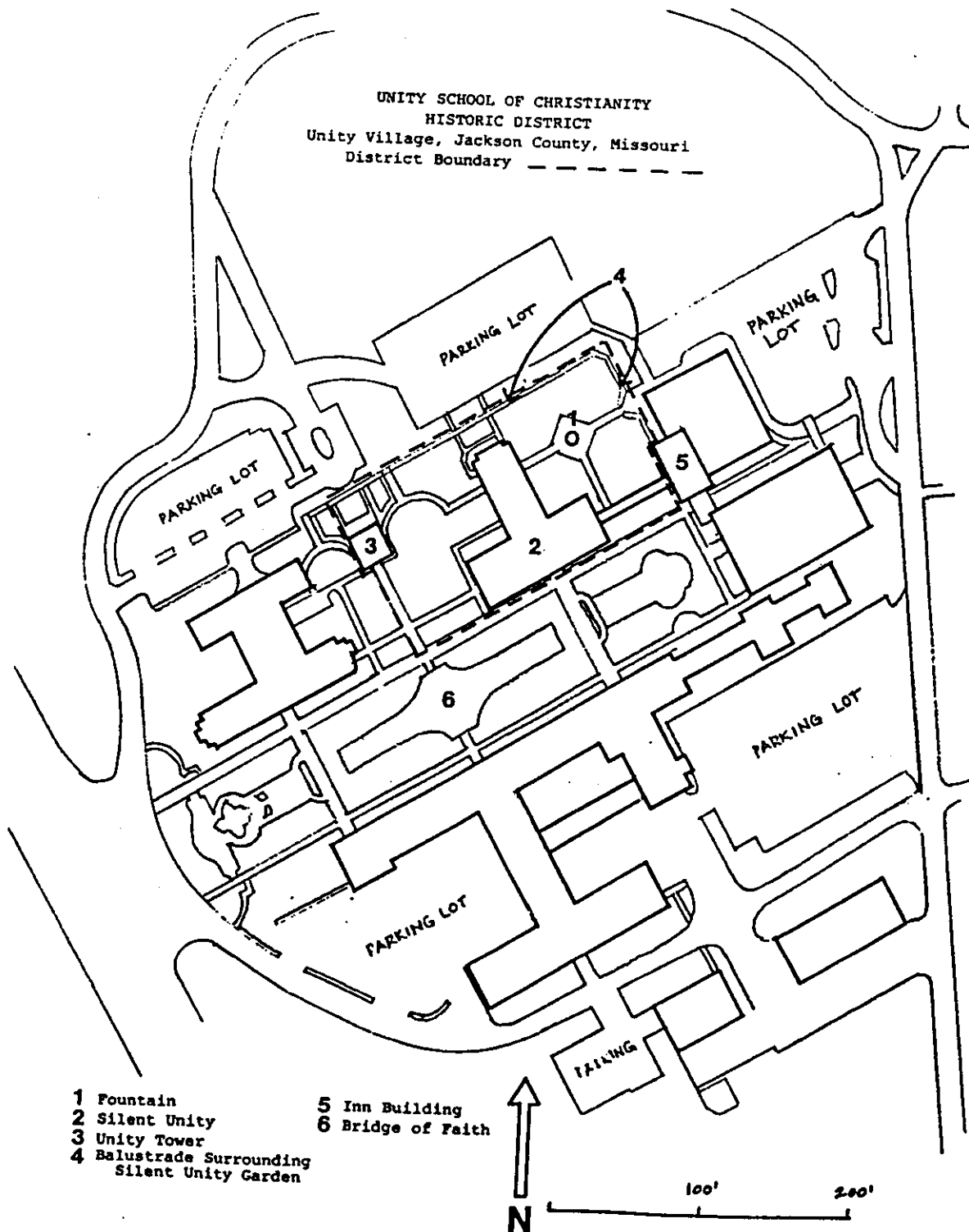
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SITE PLAN

UNITY SCHOOL OF CHRISTIANITY
HISTORIC DISTRICT
Unity Village, Jackson County, Missouri
District Boundary - - - - -



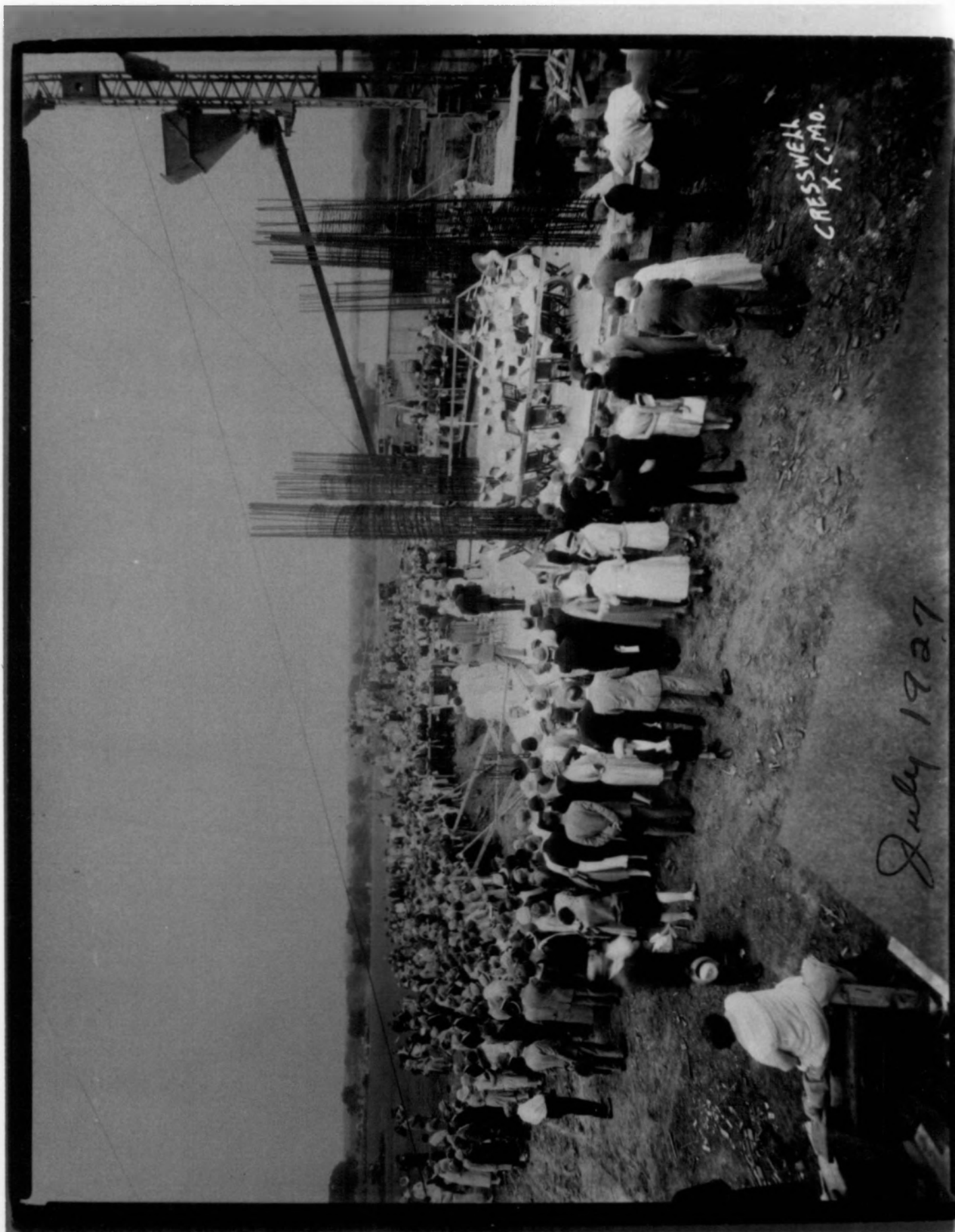


#1

Unity Tower
Unity School of Christianity Historic District
Unity Village, Pissouri
Cresswell, Kansas City, Missouri
July 1927

looking east

Near Location of Unity School of Christianity, Unity Village, Mo.



CRESSWELL
X. C. MO.

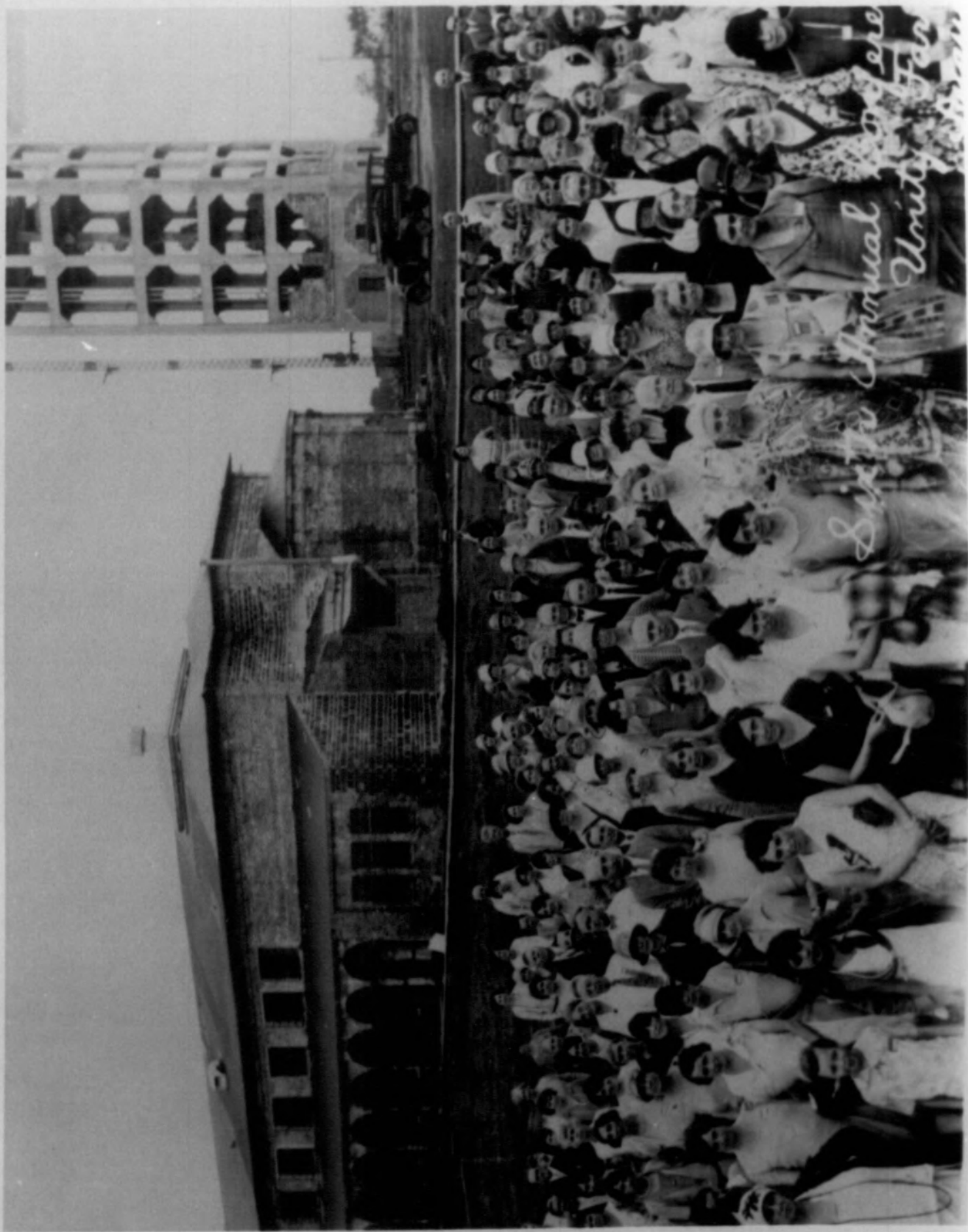
July 1927

#2

Silent Unity and Unity Tower
Unity School of Christianity Historic District
Unity Village, Pissoson
Anderson, Kansas City, Missouri
August 23, 1928

looking west, south west.

Neq. location: Unity School of Christianity, Unity Village, Mo.



Silent Unity

Unity School of Christianity Historic District.

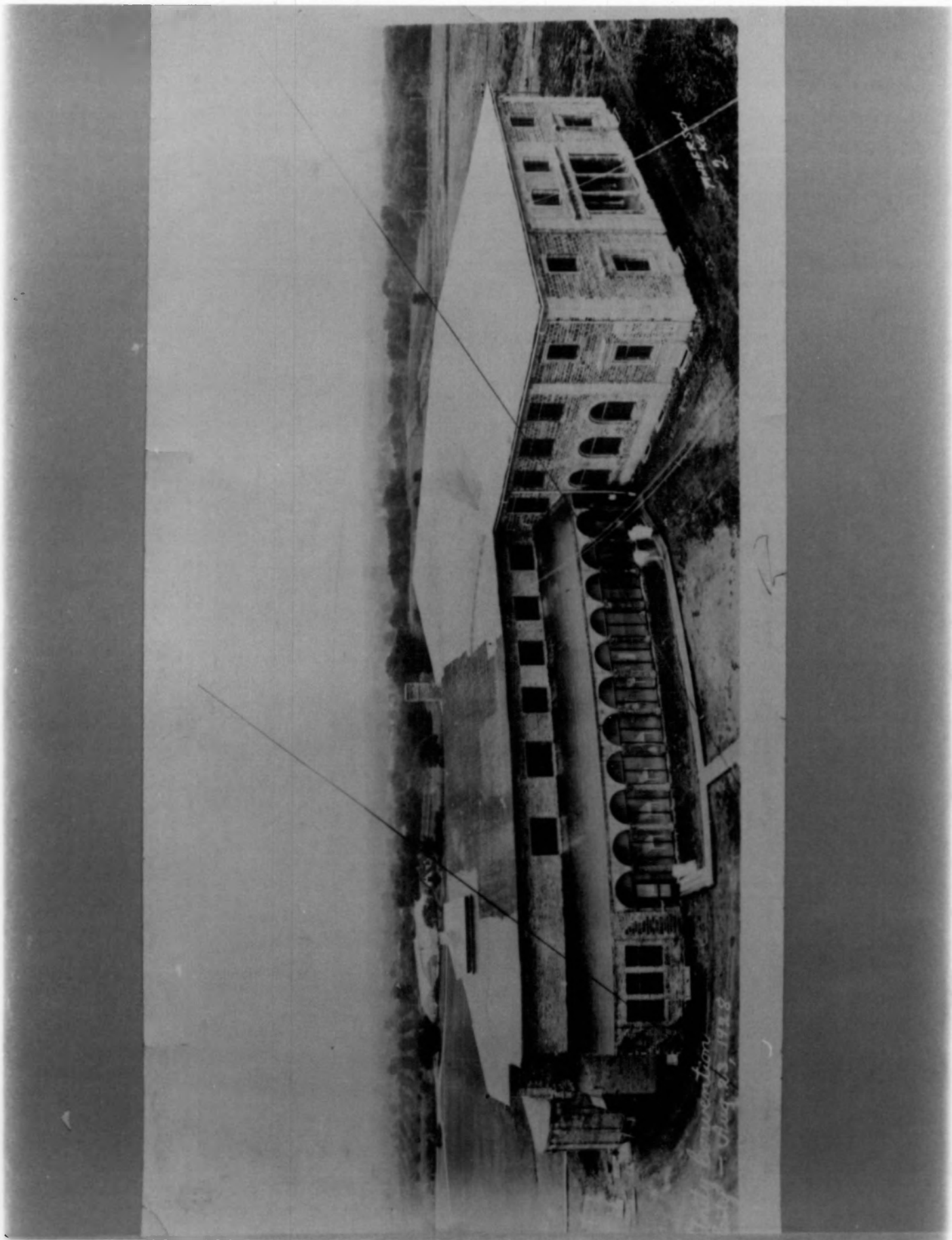
Unity Village, Missouri

Anderson, Kansas City, Missouri

August 23, 1928

looking east.

11 Neg. location: Unity School of Christianity, Unity Village, Mo.

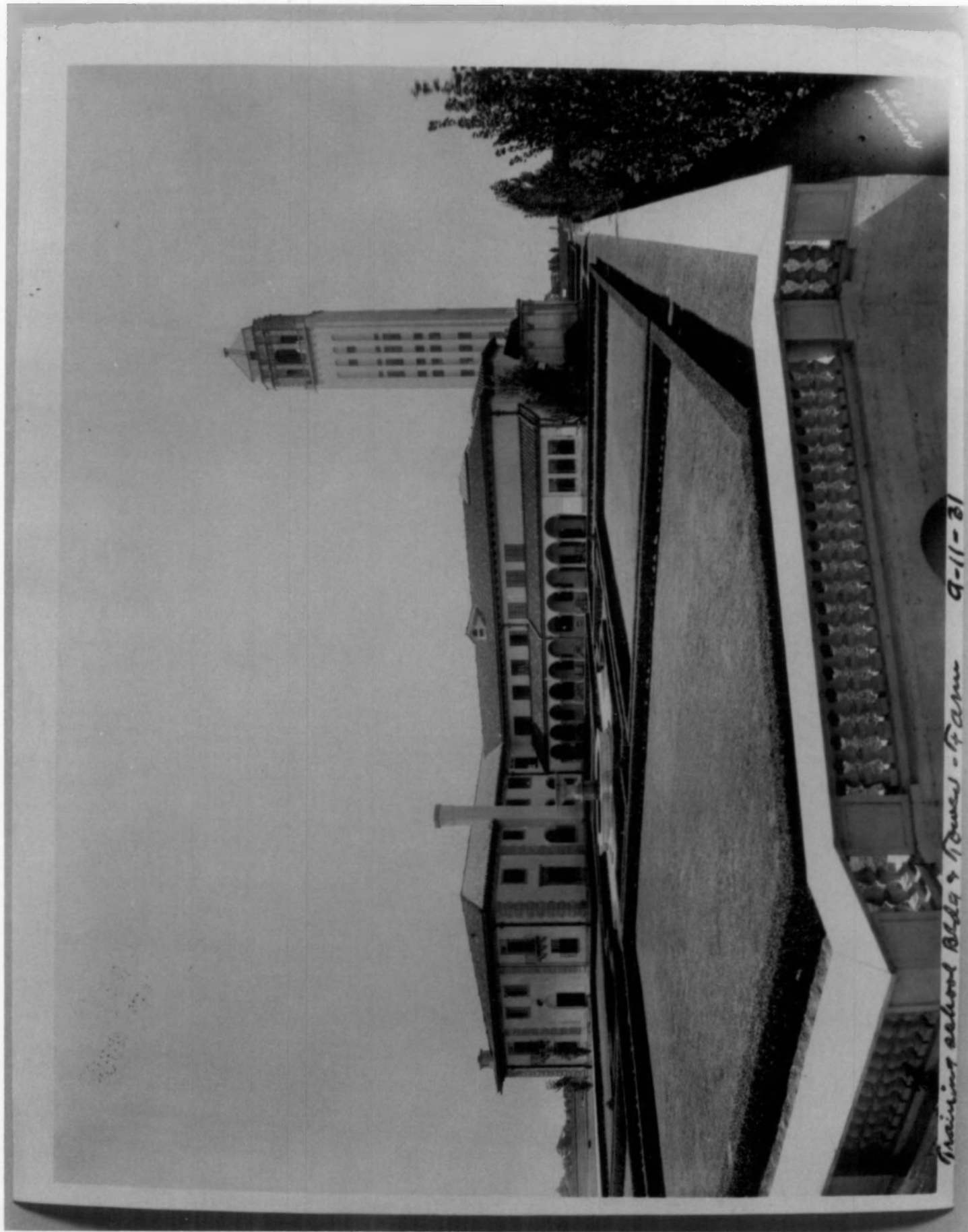


Silent Unity and Unity Tones

Unity School of Christianity Historic District
Unity Village, MO

Anderson, Kansas City, Missouri
September 11, 1931
Looking West

Neq. Location: Unity School of Christianity, Unity Village, Mo,



Training school Bldg & Tower - 17 June 9-11-31

Silent Unity
Visitors Chapel

Unity School of Christianity Historic District
Unity Village, Mo

Anderson, Kansas City, Missouri

September 11, 1931

Looking north

Neg. location: Unity School of Christianity, Unity Village, Mo.

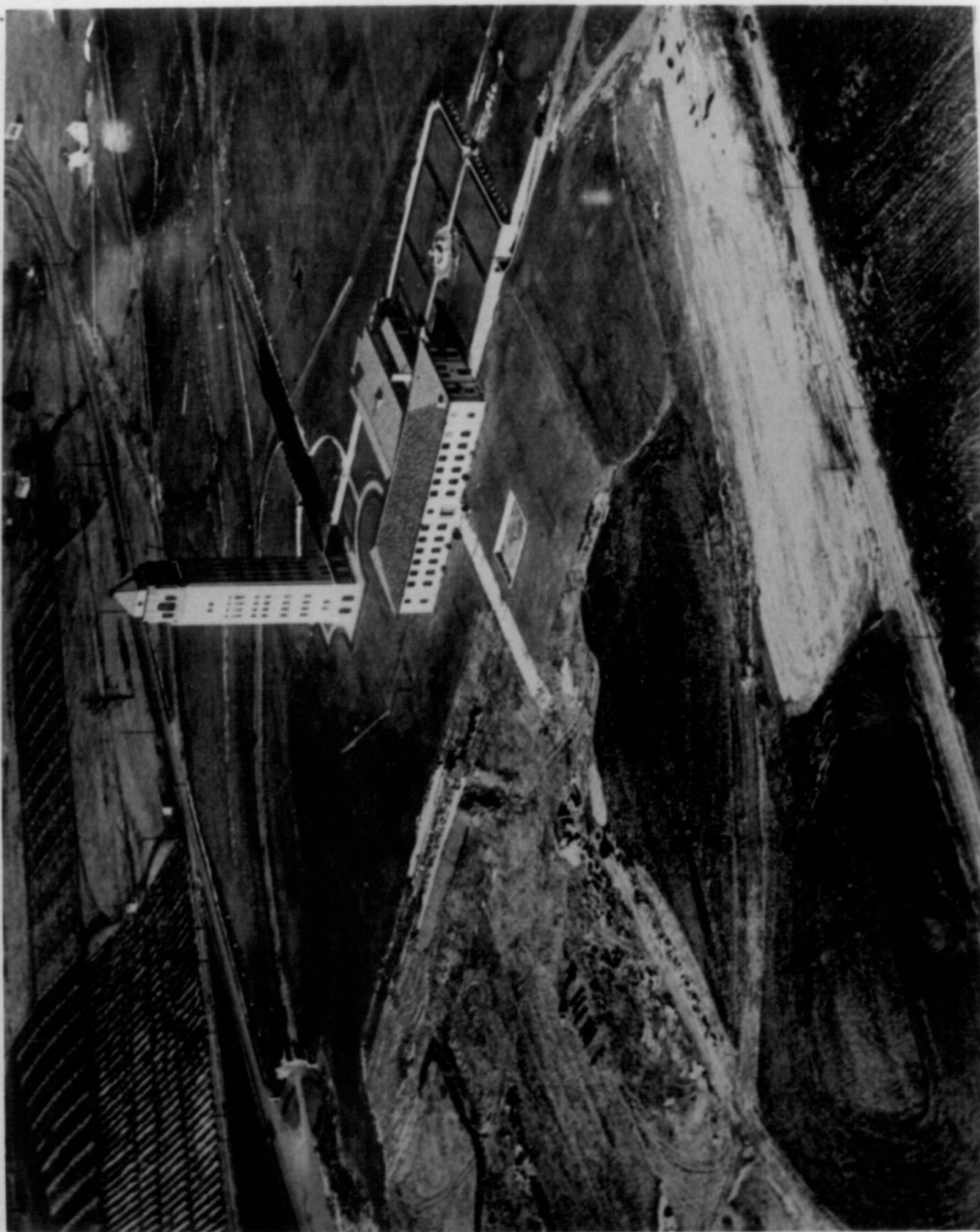
9-11-31



#6

Unity Tower and Silent Unity
Unity School of Christianity Historic District
Unity Village, Wisconsin
Photographer unknown
February 10, 1932
Looking Northwest

Loc. Location: Unity School of Christianity, Unity Village, Wisc.

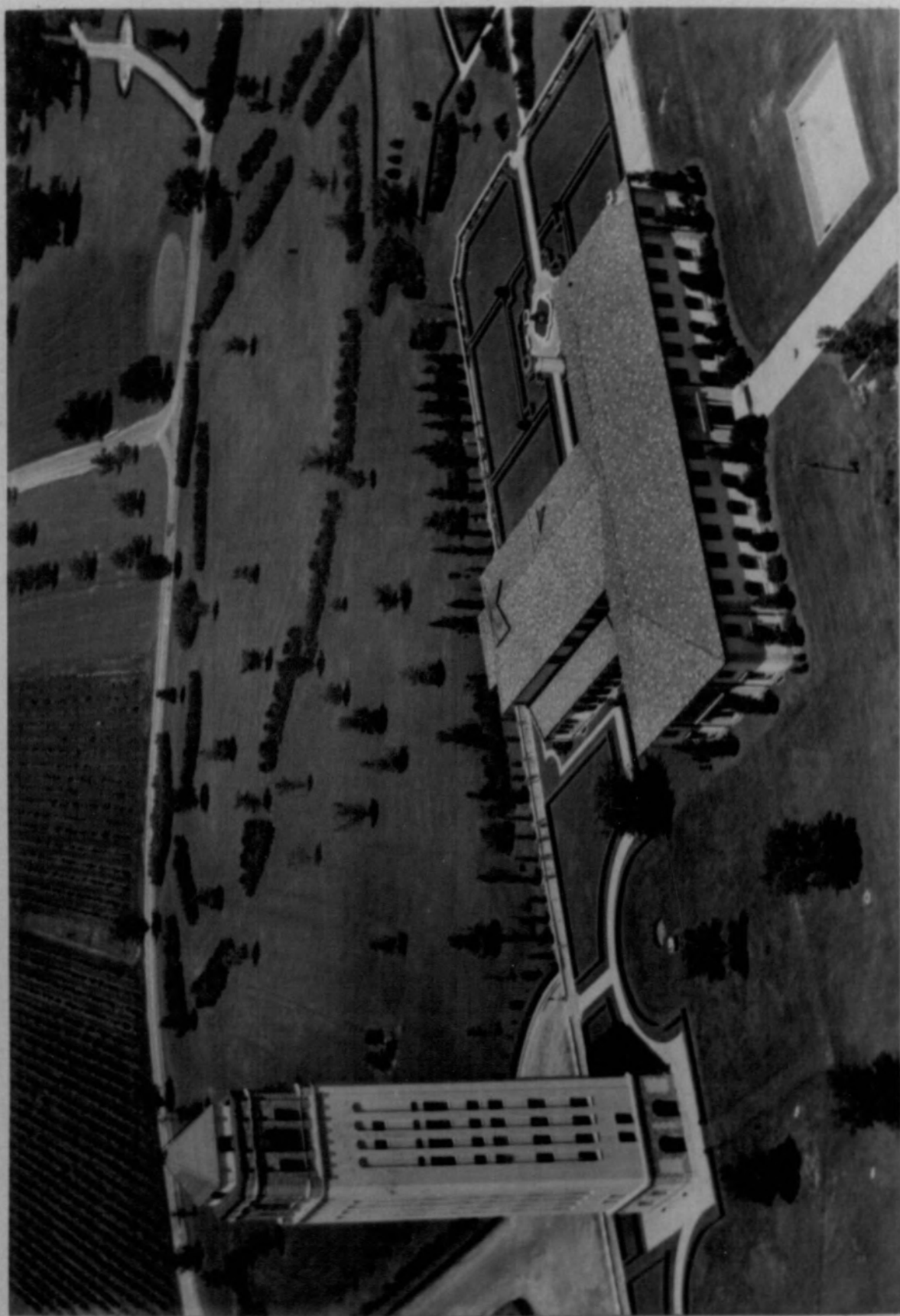


#7

Unity Tower and Silent Unity
Unity School of Christianity Historic District
Unity Village, Missouri

Don Steffa
June 12, 1938
Looking northeast

Neq. Location: Unity School of Christianity, Unity Village, Mo,



DON STEFFA

Unity Tower
Unity School of Christianity Historic District
Unity Village, Wisconsin
John Gutowski Kansas City, Missouri
3 November 1987
Unity Village

Neq. Location: John Gutowski, 6147 Holmes, K.C. Mo, 64110



Very Tough

1. Suburban 2. 100' 3. District 1 street

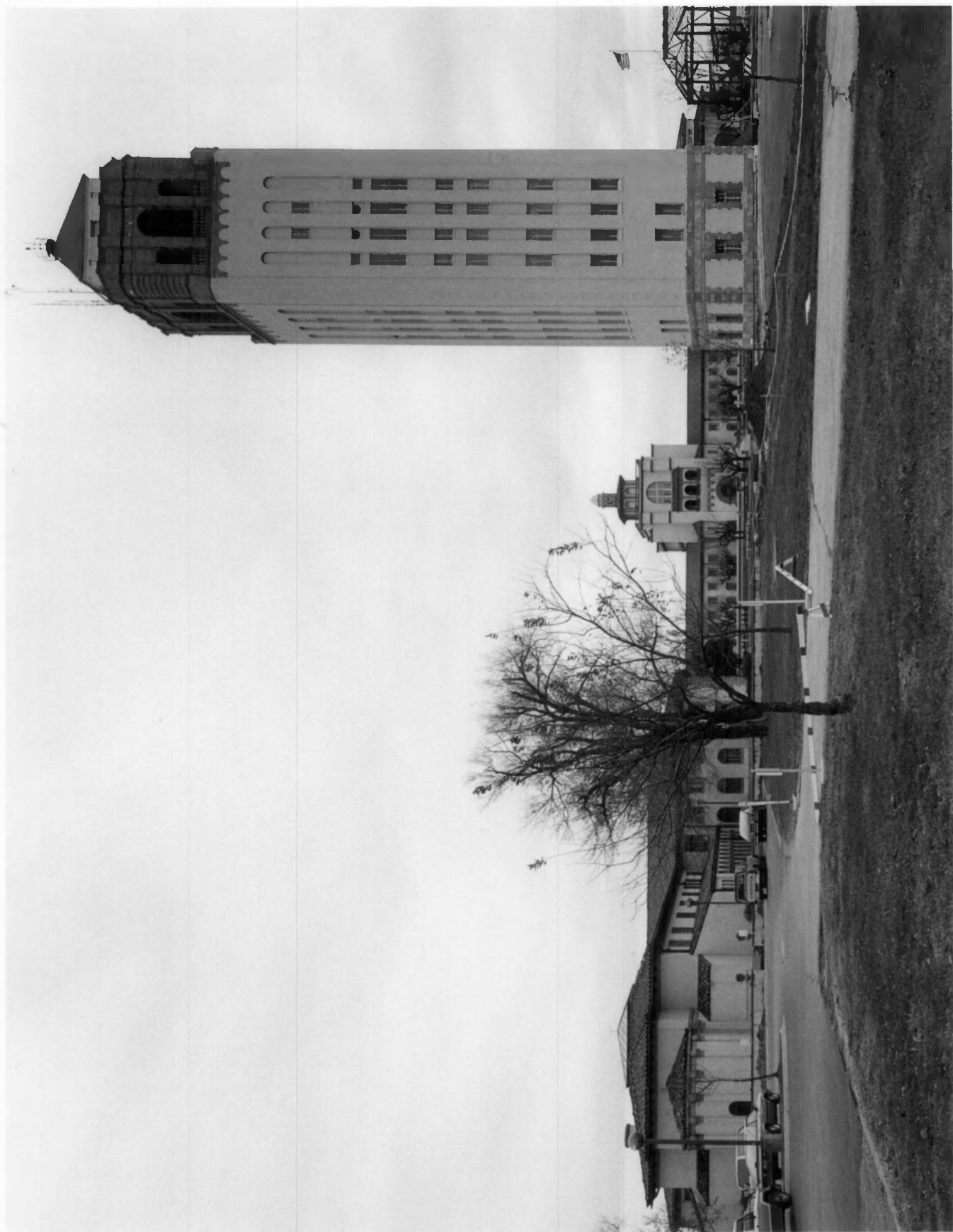
Wishy Ball, Gutowski

John Gutowski, 'Sass' by

November 13, 1987

Dooling North, Building in background is 100' elevation building is 120' 140'

Map Location: John Gutowski, 6147 Holmes, K.C., Mo. 64116



2. 11. 1987

Unity School of Christianity

Unity Village, Missouri

John Gutowski, Kansas City, Missouri

November 13, 1987

Looking West

Holston District

Neq. Location: John Gutowski, 6147 Holmes, K.C., Mo. 64110



Unity Tower

Unity School of Christianity Historic District

Unity Village, Missouri

John Gutowski, Kansas City, Missouri

November 13, 1987

Wpkins Antneast

Reg. Location: John Gutowski, 6147 Holmes, K.C., Mo. 64110



Unity Tower
detail of south facade
Unity School of Christianity
Unity Village, Missouri
John Gutowski, Kansas City, Missouri
November 13, 1987
looking north

Neg. location: John Gutowski, 6147 Holmes, K.C., Mo. 6411C



Unity Tower detail of west facade
Unity School of Christianity Historic District
Unity Village, Missouri
John Gutowski, Kansas City, Missouri
November 13, 1987
looking east

Neg. location: John Gutowski, 6147 Holmes, K.C., Mo. 64112



Unity Tower

first floor interior

Unity School of Christianity Historic District

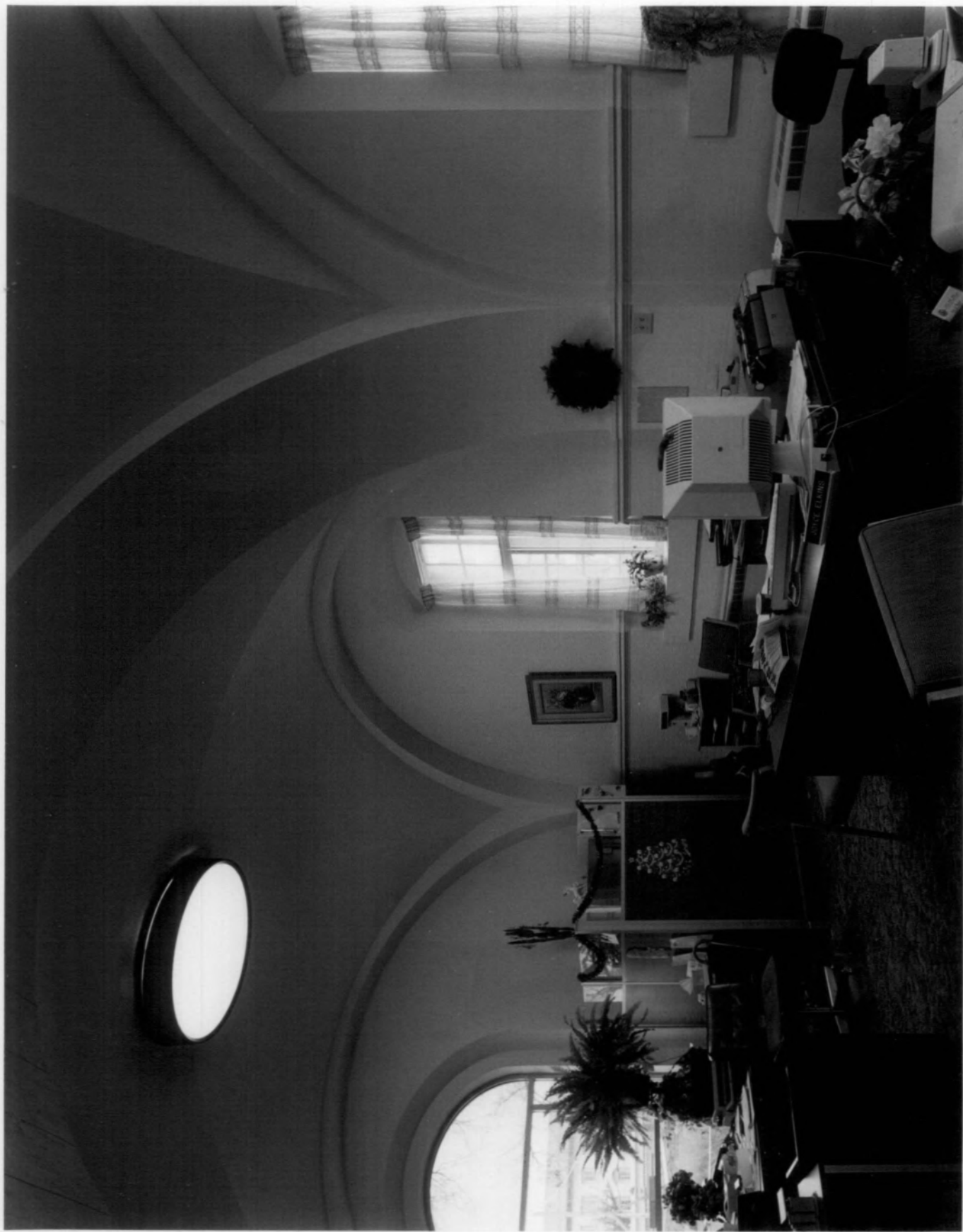
Unity Village, Missouri

John Antonski, Kansas City, Missouri

November 13, 1987

looking southwest

Neg. location: John Gustavik, 6147 Holmes, K.C., Mo. 64116



Silent Unity
Unity School of Christianity Historic District
Unity Village, Missouri
John Gutowski, Kansas City, Missouri
November 13, 1987
Looking north

Neg. Location: John Gutowski, 6147 Holmes, K.C., Mo. 64116



Silent Unity
detail of entrance, South facade
Unity School of Christian Unity Historic District
Unity Village, Missouri
John Gutowski, Kansas City, Missouri
November 13, 1987
Working North

Neg. Location: John Gutowski, 6147 Holmes, K.C., Mo. 64116



Silent Unity

detail of entrance, west facade

Unity School of Christianity Historic District

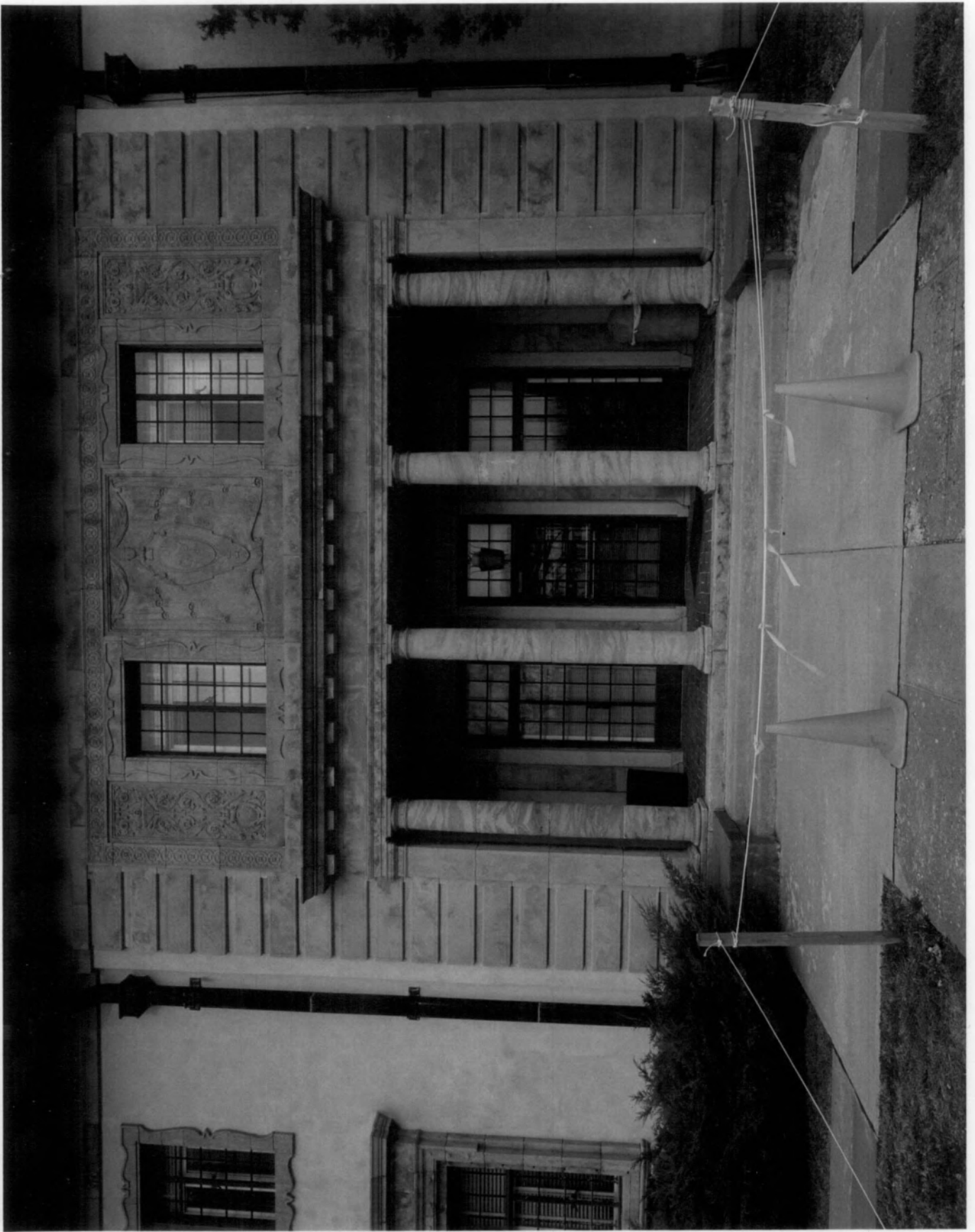
Unity Village, Missouri

John H. Brown, Kansas City, Missouri

November 13, 1987

looking east.

Neg. Location: John Guterick, 6147 Holmes, K.C., Mo. 64116



Silent Unity

Unity School of Christianity Historic District

Unity Village, Astoria

John Gutowski, Kansas City, Missouri

November 13, 1987

Looking Southwest

Map Location: John Gutowski, 6147 Holmes, K.C., Mo. 64110



Silent Unity
Unity School of Christianity
Unity Village, Missouri
John Gutowski, Kansas City, Missouri
November 13, 1987
Lorling Southwest

Neg. location: John Gutowski, 6147 Holmes, K.C., Mo. 64110



Silent Unity
detail of west facade, north end
Unity School of Christianity Historic District
Unity Village, Missouri
John Gutowski, Kansas City, Missouri
November 13, 1987
looking east.

Neg. location: John Gutowski, 6147 Holmes, K.C., Mo., 64115



#21
Silent Unity
detail of cast-stone columns, west facade
Unity School of Christianity, Historic District
Unity Village, Wisconsin
John Gutowski, Kansas City, Missouri
November 13, 1987
Working last

Neg. location: John Gutowski, 6147 Holmes, K.C., Mo. 64110



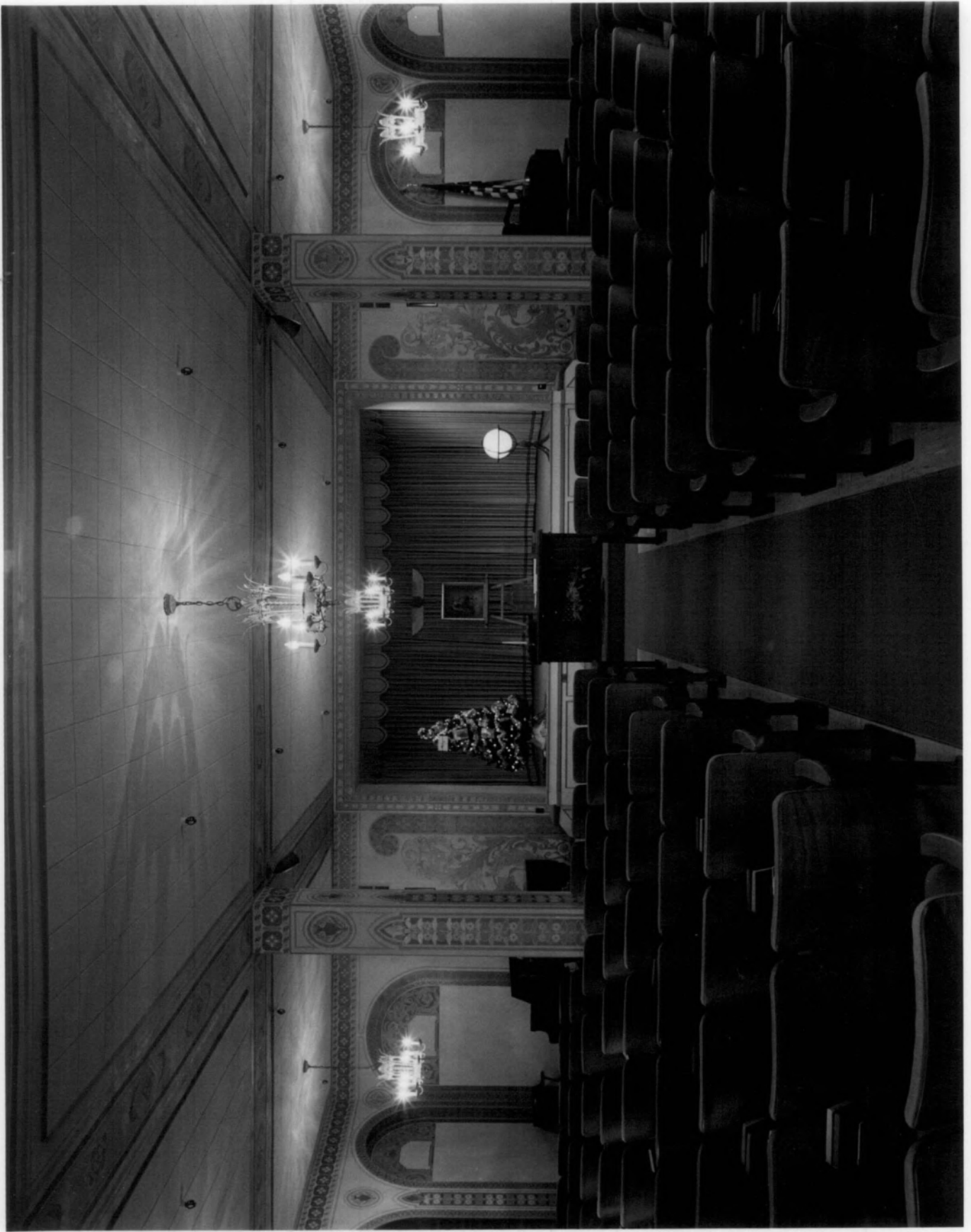
Silent Vmity
detail of apse, north end
Vmity School of Christianity
Vmity Village, Missouri
John Gutowski, canvas City, Missouri
November 13, 1987
looking south

Neg. Location: John Gutowski, 6147 Holmes, K.C., Mo., 64116



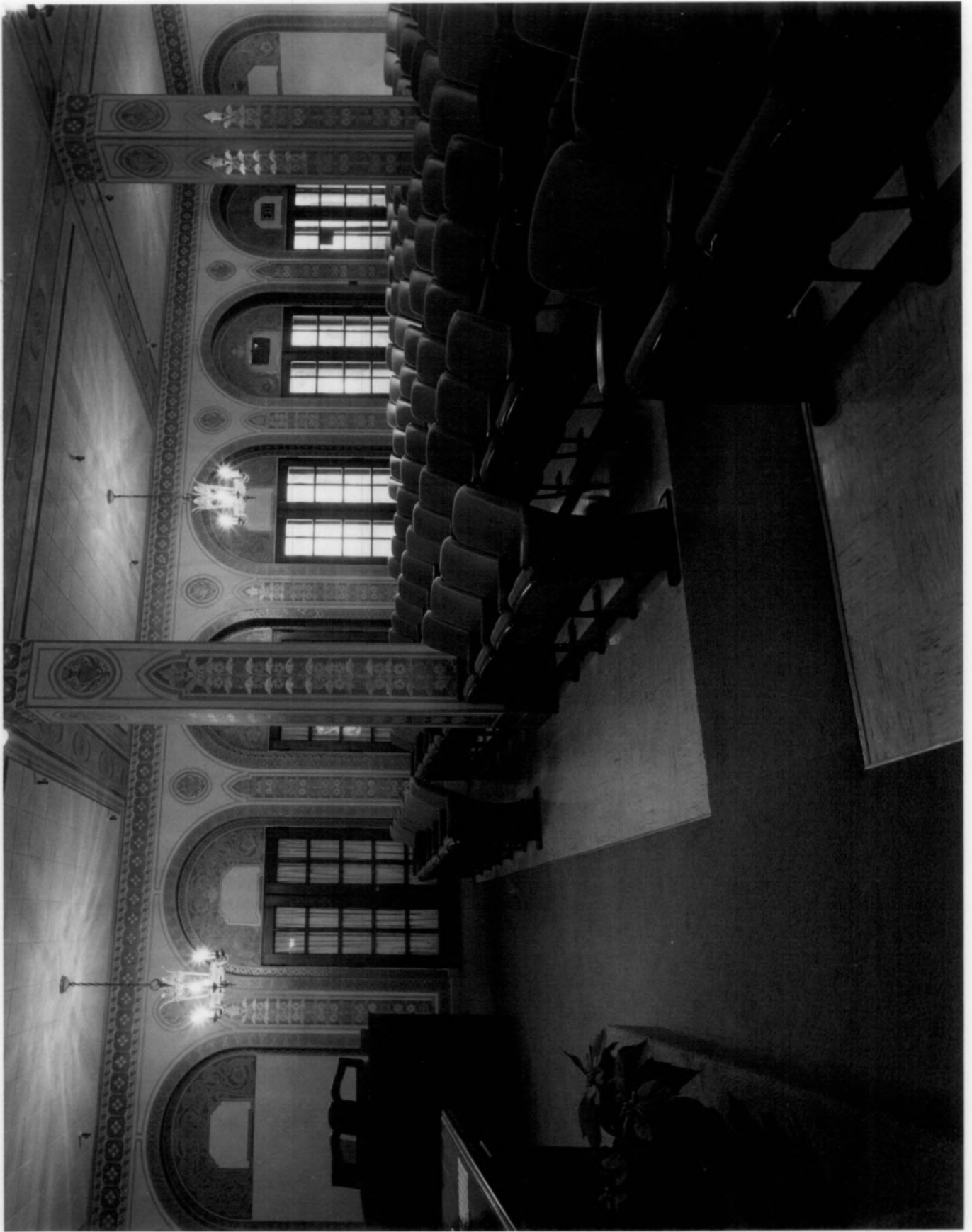
Silent Unity
Visitors Chapel
Unity School of Christianity
Unity Village, Missouri
John Gutowski, Kansas City, Missouri
December 7, 1987
Looking north

Neg. Location: John Gutowski, 6147 Holmes, K.C., Mo. 64110



Silent Unity
Visitor's Chapel
Unity School of Christianity
Unity Village, Missouri
John Gutowski, Kansas City, Missouri
December 7, 1987
Working East

Neq. Location: John Gutowski, 6147 Holmes, K.C., Mo. 64110



Silent Unity
reception area, second floor
Unity School of Christianity Historic District
Unity Village, Missouri
John Gutowski, Kansas City, Missouri
December 7, 1987
looking west

Neg. location: John Gutowski, 6147 Holmes, K.C., Mo. 64110



Silent Unity

Charles Fillmore's office, second floor
Unity School of Christianity (Historic District
Unity Village, Missouri
John Gutowski, Kansas City, Missouri

December 7, 1987
Looking Southwest

Neg. location: John Gutowski, 6147 Holmes, K.C., Mo. 64110



Silent Unity

Myrtle Fillmore's office, second floor
Unity School of Christianity, Historic District
Unity Village, Missouri
John Gutowski, Kansas City, Missouri
December 7, 1987
Looking Southwest

Key Location: John Gutowski, 6147 Holmes, K.C., Mo. 64110



Silent Unity Fountain
Unity School of Christianity Historic District
Unity Village, Ansonia
John Gutowski, Kansas City, Ansonia
December 7, 1987
Looking Northeast

Neg. Location: John Gutowski, 6147 Holmes, K.C., Mo. 64110

1987

